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HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF
NORTHAMPTON,

FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT :

IN A

SERMON,

DELIVERED ON THE

NATIONAL THANKSGIVING,

APRIL 13, 1815.

BY REV. SOLOMON WILLIAMS.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE TOWN.

Northampton :

PRINTED AT THE HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE OFFICE,
W. W. CLAPP—1815.

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*At a meeting of the Inhabitants of the town of North-
ampton on the 8th day of May 1815.*

Voted—That the Selectmen be authorized to request of the
Rev. Mr. Williams a Copy of the HISTORICAL SERMON, delivered
by him on the late National Thanksgiving, for the press; and
that they make such disposition of the Copies, among the families
of the town, as they shall think proper.

Attest, SOLOMON STODDARD, JUN. *Town Clerk.*



SERMON.

DEUTERONOMY, 32, 7.

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations ; ask thy father and he will shew thee ; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

THIS song of Moses, as it is stiled, has a very solemn introduction. Whether he addresses angels and men, or the inanimate creation called heaven and earth, may be questionable. If the latter, it may be to awaken the attention and reprove the stupidity of rational creatures, and constrain their devout regard to a subject, interesting to Israel, to that generation and to their posterity. "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak ; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." He does not hold them long in suspense. He soon enters upon a subject, which they could not too carefully study, too thoroughly understand, too deeply feel or too closely apply. What is written in the sacred volume is also designed and adapted to guide and guard us ; to profit all, who have that volume. He first unfolds a portion of supreme excellence, of the divine character, and calls for correspondent affections and conduct. "Because I will publish the name of the Lord : ascribe ye greatness unto our God." Contemplate him, feel towards him, and treat him as his transcendent majesty demands. We should all feel

that we are but worms of the dust, as nothing and less than nothing before Jehovah. Reflecting also on the moral distance, which there is between God and ourselves, we should lie low before him, and be clothed with humility.

Instead of dwelling upon his eternity, immensity and infinity, he rather selects his inviolable faithfulness, his spotless righteousness, and unerring rectitude. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." From this summary view of divine perfections, he passes directly to the future character of Israel, and the mighty evils, to which their strange and gross defection and corruption would expose them. "They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children; they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise! is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" He, who seeth the end from the beginning, by his servants, the prophets, reveals the conduct and destiny of his people for ages. He sets before them good and evil, life and death, a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if they cleave unto the Lord their God, and a curse, if they forsake him. If the latter, he charges them with folly and ingratitude. The same charge will lie on that ground against any other people; it lies against the American nation, favored perhaps beyond any other in divine Providence. We can surely own that God hath at all times helped us. He hath been on our right hand and on our left. He hath encompassed us with his salvation; given us peace, as at this time, when we did not so

soon look for it; and saved us, when we knew not from what quarter our help would come. Moses, astonished at the infatuation of Israel, carries their view back to distant periods, to the covenant transactions, in which their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were immediately concerned; to the fulfilment of the promises, made to Abraham, the father of the faithful, in their deliverance from their bitter and hard bondage in Egypt, and their preservation in the wilderness till they had almost reached the promised land. "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."

What is here urged upon God's ancient Israel, we should urge upon our own hearts. It is of good report, approves itself to reason, has the support of long experience and the sanction of revealed truth. What is past should be recalled, and according to its nature afford us instruction, warning and comfort; it should animate our devotion, strengthen our faith and hope in God, and kindle within us a pure flame of gratitude and love to our benefactor and Saviour. On special occasions it is peculiarly proper, and the rather because we have such sluggish hearts, such treacherous memories, and so many worldly cares pressing upon us.

You perceive by the proclamation, which is our warrant for this religious meeting, that what God did at first, and at different times since, for his people in this land, is suggested. God hath never ceased to do us good; though we have frequently and greatly sinned against him, he hath not cast us off; he hath not in anger shut up his tender mercies from us,

and dealt with us after our sins and iniquities. Tender hath been his compassion, rich his mercy, and marvellous his patience towards us. We may now come into his house and unite in our homage and praise. By remembering the days of old, and considering the years of past generations, and by inquiring of our fathers, and asking the elders of the people, we may excite one another to fear and praise, to love and hope in God.

Impressed with these sentiments, allow me to call your attention to a sketch of the history of this town, from its earliest settlement; and may it awaken in our hearts those feelings of gratitude and affection, so justly due to our merciful and munificent benefactor. To enable me to prepare such an account as might be satisfactory and advantageous, application was made to a member of this society, able and ready to afford the requisite information, and who had easy and full access to the necessary records and documents. The following facts are for the most part such as he has put into my possession.

The lands bordering on Connecticut river, which are now in the towns of Northampton, Hadley and Hatfield, were first known by the Indian name *Nnonotuck*. On the 6th of May 1653, a number of persons petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts to grant them liberty to plant, possess, and inhabit the place on *Conetiquot* river above Springfield, called Nonotuck, as their own inheritance, representing that the same was a place suitable to erect a town for the furtherance of the public weal, and the propagating the Gospel, and which promised, in an ordinary way, of God's providence, a comfortable subsistence, where-

by they might live and attend upon God in his holy ordinances without distraction.

At the same time, and in aid of the above petition, Mr. John Pyncheon, Elizur Holyoke and Samuel Chapin, of Springfield, presented their petition to the general court, stating that the place was very commodious, containing large quantities of excellent land and meadow, and tillable ground, sufficient for two large plantations; that divers in the neighbouring plantations had a desire to remove thither, to the number of twenty-five families at least that had already appeared, whereof many of them were of considerable quality for estates and fit matter for a church; they therefore requested, that liberty might be granted to erect a plantation about fifteen miles above them on the river *Conetiquot*, that so the glory of God might be furthered, and the peace and happiness of the government not retarded. Their inducement, in these desires, they declared, was not any sinister respect of their own; but that, being so alone, they might by this means have some more neighborhood of this jurisdiction.

In answer to these petitions, the general court, on the 18th of May 1653, appointed a committee to divide the land petitioned for, into two plantations, and ordered that the petitioners should make one of them, where they should have liberty to plant themselves.

It is probable that the committee attended to the business assigned them immediately; and on the 9th of May 1654, they reported to the general court, that having been appointed to lay out the land at *Nonotuck* for two plantations, they for the present had only appointed the bounds of one of them, to which they

allowed the great meadow on the west side of Connecticut river; as also, a little meadow called *Capawonk*, (otherwise called *Lampaunchus*,) which they described as lying about two miles above the great meadow; and to extend from the upper end of the little meadow to the great falls down towards Springfield; and eastward, to extend nine miles into the woods, from the river Connecticut: the said meadows and uplands to belong to the petitioners, and such as should come to plant with them, who, according to liberty granted them from the court, had made choice thereof for themselves and their successors; not molesting the Indians, or depriving them of their just rights and propriety, without allowance to their satisfaction.

The other plantation, which the committee omitted then to lay out, was afterwards formed into the town of Hadley, in which Hatfield was at that time included.

There is a tradition, that one English family came to this place in 1652, and lived here during the next winter, on land which lies east of what is called *Hawley street*. However this may be, in the year 1653, a number of the petitioners took possession of the township, in consequence of the liberty given them by the government.

Selectmen, or townsmen, as they were then generally called, were chosen in the year 1655. It is presumed from this, as well as from other circumstances, that the town was incorporated in the year 1654. But it is said the act of incorporation cannot now be found.*

* It was probably burnt, with the records, in the great fire in Boston, in 1711, or afterwards, when the court house was burnt.

The Indian title to the land had been purchased in 1653, from a number of Indians, who claimed to be the owners of it; and a deed was given by them accordingly, to the use of the settlers. But on the 28th of September, 1658, the sachem, *Umpanchela*, complained to the commissioners, assembled to hold a court at Northampton, that he had not received so much for his part of the land as he expected. It was thereupon agreed by the inhabitants to satisfy his demand; and the Sachem executed a new deed, in the presence of the court, releasing to the inhabitants of Northampton, all his right and title to the township.

On the 17th of October, 1658, the town voted to give away their whole right and title to *Capawonk* or *Nampaunsus*, which is now the south meadow in Hatfield, on condition, among other things, that the grantees should come and settle two plantations, one on the east side of the great river, and the other on the west, and begin to inhabit upon it the next May; and that themselves, and their families, should not desert it for seven years. This seems to refer to the first settlement of Hadley and Hatfield.

At a General Court, holden at Boston, on the 7th of May 1662, it was ordered, that thenceforth Springfield, Northampton and Hadley should be constituted a county, and be called *Hampshire*; the bounds on the south to be the south line of the patent, and to extend full thirty miles distant from either of said towns; that Springfield should be the shire town, and that the courts should be kept one time at Springfield, and another time at Northampton; and the shire meetings, one year at one town and the next year at the other.

For the space of twenty two years after this town was settled, the Indians continued to live here peaceably in the neighborhood of the English inhabitants. In April 1664, they petitioned the town for a place to build a Fort, which was granted them, on conditions, purporting that they should behave in an orderly manner. This fort is said to have been built on the northerly end of *Fort Plain*, which is now in Easthampton. The danger, apprehended by the Indians, probably arose from the hostility of neighboring tribes, as there were several instances of murder, committed on their people, either by Indians from abroad, or by some among themselves, who afterward absconded. And though complaints were sometimes made of their petty thefts, and of abuses committed when they were in a state of intoxication, yet they remained here in peace and friendship with the English, until the war commenced in 1675, called *Philip's war*, in the course of which they left this part of the country, and none of them have ever since had a settled residence here.

At the beginning of Philip's war, the Indians about Springfield, Northampton and Hadley seemed inclined to join the English, or at least to remain neutral ; but they were soon induced by the emissaries of Philip to unite with him and the other hostile Indians. The combination was so general and extensive, as to endanger the existence, not only of the settlements on Connecticut river, but of the whole colony. The Indians frequently assaulted the towns on the river, and in some instances did great mischief to the inhabitants, killing their cattle and destroying their property, when they were unable to take their lives.

On the 25th of August 1675, the Indians killed *Samuel Mason*, in this town, and on the 28th of Sept. in the same year, they killed *Praisever Turner* and two other persons. About the middle of October following, seven or eight men, venturing to bring in some of their harvest from *Pynchon's meadow*, were suddenly attacked by the Indians, and the greater part, being destitute of arms, as the enemy had observed where they were deposited and seized them, they were glad to flee with their horses, which they took from their carts. One of them, however, got possession of his gun, and killed one of the Indians, and then escaped with the rest. At the same time the Indians burnt four or five houses, and two or three barns, that stood at some distance from the principal settlement. On the 29th of the same month, the Indians killed *Thomas Salmon*, *Joseph Baker*, and *Joseph Baker jr.* as they were at work in the meadow, and attempted to burn the mill, but it was so well defended, that they were unable to effect their purpose.

To guard against a surprise, the inhabitants made a kind of barricado about the town, by setting up pallisados, or cleft wood about eight feet long, to check the force of any sudden assault. This must have been a weak defence against a warlike enemy, but it proved to be of great use against the Indians; for though on the 14th of March 1676 a large number of them broke through the pallisados at the lower end of the street, now called *Pleasant street*, in three places, yet as a company of soldiers had arrived in town the evening before, the Indians met with a warm reception, and as soon as they began to be repulsed, they fled with precipitation through the breaches, and never afterwards,

during that war, adventured to break into this or the neighboring towns, that were so secured. In this attack, they killed *Robert Bartlet*, and *Thomas Holton*, and two other men and two women, and set fire to four or five dwelling houses, and as many barns. Many of the Indians, it was supposed, were killed.

In the attack, made upon the Indians at Deerfield, near Miller's Falls, on the 19th of May 1676, by upwards of one hundred and fifty men, who had been collected from Northampton, Hadley and Hatfield, and which has been called the *Fall fight*, several of the inhabitants of this town lost their lives, with *Capt. William Turner*, who commanded them. Of those, who marched from Northampton, fifteen were killed; but as some of them were garrison soldiers, and others inhabitants of the town, I am not able to ascertain the exact number of the latter.

The pallisados, before mentioned, were kept up several years; but having gone to decay, the people in March 1690, considering themselves in danger of being assaulted by the enemy, encompassed a great part of the town with pickets, near the place where the former stood in Philip's war. This kind of defence was maintained for a number of succeeding years.

On the 13th of May 1704, old style, the Indians attacked the village of *Paskhomuck*. The inhabitants had been settled there only two or three years, the town having granted them their home lots in 1699. The Indians had been to Merrimac river, but met with no success; they then directed their course toward Westfield, but Westfield river was so high, that they could not pass it. Some of the Indians had been

at Northampton in a friendly manner the year before, and informed their companions, that there was a small village at Paskhomuck, where they might get provisions, for they were almost famished, and intended, as they afterwards declared, to resign themselves up, if they could obtain no food otherwise. In the evening before the 13th of May, the Indians went upon Mount Tom, and observed the situation of the place. As the meadow was then covered with water, they supposed the village might be taken, and that no aid could come seasonably from the town, on account of the intervening flood. The village consisted only of five families, *Samuel Janes's*, *Benoni Jones's*, *John Searls's*, *Deacon Benjamin Janes's* and *Moses Hutchinson's*.^{*} A little before day-light, the Indians attacked the village. *Benoni Jones's* house, which stood on the lot where *Nathaniel Kentfield* afterwards lived, was encompassed with pickets. The Indians procured flax and other combustibles, and set them on fire, which was communicated to the house. A young woman, named *Patience Webb*, was waked, and looking out of the window was shot through the head. The people surrendered, and all the above families were killed or taken prisoners. Some of the prisoners were afterwards rescued by the people from the town. These, commanded by Capt. Taylor, went round by Pomroy's meadow, and met the Indians near the Mountain, when a skirmish ensued, in which *Capt. Taylor* was killed. Of the five families before mentioned, the Indians killed

^{*} Samuel Janes lived where the house of Mr. Obadiah Janes now stands; John Searls, where his son Elisha and his grand-son of the same name afterwards dwelt; Benjamin Janes, where Captain Philip Clark lives; and Moses Hutchinson, near the place where Mr. Solomon Ferry's house stands.

the following persons ; *Samuel Janes* and his wife and three children ; *Benoni Jones* and two children, and the young woman before named ; *John Searls* and three children ; *Deacon Benjamin Janes* and four children ; and *Moses Hutchinson* and one child. The wife of Benjamin Janes was taken to the top of Pomroy's mountain, and was there knocked in the head and scalped. Our people found her in that situation, and perceiving that she was still alive, brought her home, and she recovered and lived till she was more than eighty years old. The wife of Moses Hutchinson was taken prisoner, but soon made her escape. John Searls' wife was also taken and severely wounded, but was afterwards rescued from the Indians. Benoni Jones' wife, and Elisha, the son of John Searls, were taken prisoners to Canada. Ten Indians went to the *lower farms*, where there was then but one house, in which Captain Wright lived, at the place afterwards owned by Mr. Elias Lyman. Captain Wright refused to surrender, and shot one of the Indians and broke his arm. They then attempted to burn the house by shooting spiked arrows, dipped in brimstone, upon the roof ; but a young man in the house, named *Thomas Stebbins*, wrapping himself in a feather bed, drew water from the well, and put out the fire.*

In August of the same year, 1704, the Indians fired on some men, who were going from Northampton to

* The season at that time was remarkably backward ; for though so late in the year, being the 24th of May, according to the present style, the trees and bushes had not budded ; and the year was so far advanced before the flood subsided from the meadow, that many persons doubted whether it was expedient to plant their corn ; but notwithstanding, as there was no frost till late in the season, the crop of corn proved to be uncommonly good.

Westfield, and killed one, and took two prisoners; but others of our men, coming up, retook the prisoners and killed two of the Indians.

July 9th, 1708, *Samuel Parsons* and *Joseph Parsons* were killed in Northampton by the Indians.

On the 10th of August, 1711, *Samuel Strong, Jun.* was killed, and his father taken prisoner.

August 26th, 1724, *Nathaniel Edwards, 2d*, was killed by the Indians, in the road near Bartlet's mill, and another person was wounded.

In the year 1745, the town, considering themselves in danger of an invasion from the French and Indians, agreed to take measures to fortify themselves. For this purpose the town was divided into fourteen sections, in each of which one house was fortified and guarded with flankers, to be a place of refuge for the women and children: they also erected mounts or watch houses in divers places, particularly in the extreme parts of the town. Before the end of that war, on the 27th of August, 1747, *Elisha Clark* was killed by the Indians, when he was threshing in his barn, in that part of the town, which is now Southampton. At another time, in the course of the same war, *Noah Pixley* was killed in the road, in the same quarter of the town.

In the war, which commenced in 1755, no injury was done by the French or Indians in Northampton. The people, however, thought themselves in danger, and for some time, at the commencement of the war, a watch was maintained, in the night time, in divers parts of the town. A number of soldiers were also stationed at Southampton for the defence of the inhabitants of that district.

I have heard of other instances of mischief done in this place by the Indians, but have not learned the particulars. From the first settlement of the town it was an exposed frontier, until after the conquest of Canada in the year 1759. Settlements had been gradually extended northward upon Connecticut river, but fear of the French and Indians prevented improvements at any considerable distance west from the river. The country to the west and north-west, between this place and Canada, was a wilderness for more than a hundred years after the town was settled.

Among the earliest transactions of the people of this place, we find that measures were taken for the settlement of the gospel ministry among them. On the 7th of June 1658, it was agreed in town meeting, by unanimous consent, to desire *Mr. Eleazer Mather* to be a minister to them in a way of trial in dispensing his gifts. In December of that year, the town voted that a rate of one hundred pounds should be levied for building a house for the ministry; and on the 4th of January then next following, they agreed to lay out eighty acres of meadow for the ministry.

The Rev. Eleazer Mather was the first settled minister in the town. He was a son of the Rev. Richard Mather of Dorchester, and was born at that place May 13th, 1637. When a church was gathered at Northampton, he was ordained the pastor of it on the 18th of June, 1661, and was greatly esteemed as a man of talents and piety. Soon after the ordination of Mr. Mather, Mr. *John Strong* was ordained *ruling elder* of the church. On the 23d of November, 1662, the people unanimously expressed their desire to settle Mr. *Joseph Elliot* among them as a *teacher*. This

appears to have been also the desire of Mr. Mather, the pastor; for on the 30th of December of the same year, the church voted unanimously, that two teaching officers were appointed as ordinances of Christ Jesus in his church, and that it was the duty of every church to do what in them lay, that they might be furnished with two teaching officers. In the language of the *Cambridge Platform*, which they seem to have adopted, the office of pastor and teacher was distinct. The *pastor's* special work was to attend to exhortation, and therein to administer a word of wisdom. The *teacher* was to attend to doctrine, and therein to administer a word of knowledge. The *ruling elder* was to join with the pastor and teacher in acts of spiritual rule, in admitting members, ordaining officers, and excommunicating offenders, and to feed the flock of God with a word of admonition. The same distinction of offices had then been generally adopted in the Colony; but soon after, it gradually ceased, and there is now, perhaps, no instance of its being preserved in any of the Congregational churches.

It appears from the records of the town, that Mr. Elliot assisted Mr. Mather in the ministry for a year or two, and a settlement and salary were offered him by the inhabitants, who agreed to build him a house; but he was never ordained as a public teacher in the town.

On the 12th of July 1661, the town voted to build a meeting-house forty two feet square. At the same time a committee was chosen to carry on and finish the work, which they afterwards completed accordingly.

The town had agreed in the year 1658, that the burying place should be on the meeting house hill, near the ground on which the present meeting house stands. But in October 1661, they voted, that the place

of burial on the meeting house hill should be altered, and a Committee was chosen to find a more convenient place. At the next meeting in May 1662, the Committee reported in favor of the place, which has ever since been used for that purpose.

The first English inhabitants in Northampton formed their settlement in a wilderness, when the savages were numerous, and when, excepting the town of Springfield, there were no white inhabitants of the State within eighty miles of this place.* Several of the first planters were of those, who came from England in 1630 and first settled at Roxbury; some of them had moved in 1636 from Roxbury to Springfield. But it appears that many of the early settlers of this town were of the company, which sailed from Plymouth in England, March 30th, 1630, and arrived at Nantasket on the 30th of May following. They first began a settlement at Dorchester. Their ministers were Mr. Warham and Mr. Maverick. In 1635 and 1636, Mr. Warham, and the greater part of his church, moved from Dorchester to Windsor in Connecticut.

Previous to Mr. Mather's settlement here, viz. on the 28th of April 1661, he took a dismission from the church at Dorchester, and at the same time several others, who had moved to this town, and were members of the church in Dorchester, were dismissed from it, to join in gathering a church in Northampton. A number had also come from Windsor to settle here, who had accompanied Mr. Warham from the time he left England. From these men, who came from Windsor and Dorchester, and who were persons of exemplary virtue and piety, it is presumed that most of the present inhabitants of Northampton, Southamp-

* At that time the nearest English settlements in this State, except Springfield, were at Concord and Sudbury. In a short time afterwards Marlborough was settled.

ton, Westhampton and Easthampton are descended. The three last were originally part of Northampton.

Mr. Mather died on the 24th of July, 1669. By his wife, who was daughter of the Rev. Mr. Warham of Windsor, he left one daughter, who married the Rev. Mr. Williams of Deerfield, and was killed by the Indians, when that town was destroyed in February 1704. In a publication of Dr. Increase Mather of Boston, who was a younger brother to Mr. Mather of this town, he is said to have preached at Northampton eleven years. It appears, therefore, that from the time he was invited to preach on probation in June 1658, he continued to preach here three years before he was ordained. In the year 1671 a treatise was published under the title of "*serious exhortations to the present and succeeding generation in New-England, earnestly calling upon them all to endeavour that the Lord's gracious presence may be continued with posterity; being the substance of the four last Sermons preached at Northampton by the Rev. Eleazer Mather.*"

Soon after the death of Mr. Mather, Mr. Solomon Stoddard was invited to preach in this town; and on the 4th of March 1670, the town voted unanimously, that they hoped by the blessing of God to give Mr. Solomon Stoddard, on condition of his settlement among them, one hundred pounds yearly, as long as he continued among them, and carried on the work of the ministry alone. Mr. Stoddard continued to preach here, and on the 7th of February 1672, he wrote a Letter, addressed "to the Rev. John Strong, ruling elder of the Church of Christ in Northampton," accepting their call. In this Letter, after referring to the invitation of the church and people that he would

undertake to be their pastor, he says, “ without eye-
 “ ing that power and grace which God has treasured
 “ up in Jesus Christ, it were altogether vain for me
 “ to attempt such an undertaking. The best is, that
 “ when we have the command of God for our war-
 “ rant, we have his promise both for assistance and
 “ pardon. I do therefore venture to declare, that it
 “ is my intention, sometime this next summer, to
 “ answer your desire in accepting of your invitation,
 “ giving up myself the residue of my days to the ser-
 “ vice of the house of God in this place; beseeching
 “ you, who are not altogether unacquainted with the
 “ difficulties, temptations and burdens of such a work,
 “ nor wholly strangers to my unfitness, to bow
 “ your knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 “ earnestly begging that he would fit me by his Spir-
 “ it for so solemn a charge, and make me a blessing
 “ unto you and your posterity; that I may be enabled
 “ to be a faithful steward, and that my labor may not
 “ be in vain; that light, and peace, and the power of
 “ religion may be continued in this plantation.”—

Mr. Stoddard was accordingly ordained on the 11th of September 1672. He married the widow of the Rev. Mr. Mather, and was an eminent and useful minister of the gospel in this place until his death, which happened on the 11th of February 1729 in the 86th year of his age. His son, the Hon. John Stoddard, was several years a member of the Council, and held other important offices. The Hon. Joseph Hawley, who was his grandson, was also distinguished in public life, and was a liberal benefactor to the town.

In the life time of Mr. Stoddard, on the 29th of August 1726, the town voted to invite *Mr. Jonathan Edwards*, whose mother was Mr. Stoddard's daugh-

ter, to assist the Rev. Mr. Stoddard in the work of the ministry ; and on the 21st of November following, he was invited to settle among them in that office, and was ordained on the 15th of February 1727.

On the 6th of November 1735, the town voted to build a new meeting-house, and raise and cover it by the end of the then next summer. This new meeting-house was placed northeasterly from the old, and as near to it as might be ; it was not finished until December 1737. Before it was completed, viz. on the 13th of March 1737, the front gallery of the old meeting-house fell, when the people were assembled on the Sabbath for public worship ; but through the goodness of God, though great numbers were upon and under the gallery, no one was killed or mortally wounded.

The Rev. Mr. Edwards continued in the ministry in this town more than twenty-three years, and was highly and universally esteemed and respected ; but at length an unhappy disagreement arose between him and the major part of his people, concerning the qualifications for admission into the church, and in consequence of it, the pastoral relation between Mr. Edwards and the church was dissolved on the 22d of June 1750.

An act of the General Court was passed on the 5th of January 1753, by which the second precinct in the town of Northampton was erected into a separate district by the name of *Southampton*. The Rev. Jonathan Judd had been ordained the pastor of the church in that part of the town in 1743. He was a worthy minister, of an amiable character, and continued in the ministry until his death in 1803. The Rev. Vinson Gould, his successor, was ordained in August 1801.

On the 5th of December 1753, *Mr. John Hooker*, was ordained to the work of the ministry in North-

ampton, and continued in the faithful and acceptable discharge of the duties of that office until his death, which happened on the 6th of February in the year 1777, when he was in the 49th year of his age. He died of the small pox, and was sincerely and deeply lamented by the affectionate people of his charge.*—His successor was ordained June 4th 1778.

In September 1778, the westerly part of the town of Northampton, separated by a line four miles eastward from the west line of the town of Northampton, and parrallel thereto, was incorporated into a town by the name of *Westhampton*. The Rev. Enoch Hale, the first settled minister, was invested with that office on the 29th day of September 1779.

The easterly part of the original township of Northampton was incorporated into a district on the 17th of June 1785 by the name of *Easthampton*, and was afterwards, on the 16th of June 1809, formed into a town. The Rev. Payson Williston, who was the first settled minister there, was ordained in July 1789.

It will be difficult to find an instance, where a town, having but one religious society, has been so long favored with a succession of such able, pious and distinguished Ministers, as the people of this town were indulged with, for nearly one hundred and twenty years, in the successive labors of Mr. Mather, Mr. Stoddard, Mr. Edwards, and Mr. Hooker. At different times, as some of you well know, their ministry was remarkably successful; and during all that period, with one unfortunate, but short exception, the people and their minister lived together in harmony, and were united in religious sentiments and mutual affection. There was but rarely an individual, who dissented

* Mr. Hooker was grandson of the Rev. Mr. Hooker of Farmington, Conn. and great grandson of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, the first minister of Hartford.

from those doctrines and that mode of worship, which had been approved by our ancestors, who first came to this country.

If your patience, my hearers, be not quite exhausted, some other things may without impropriety be subjoined.

The records of the church in this place were formerly kept with less clearness and accuracy, than in later times. When the church was first gathered, the whole number of members was 71. In 1679, more than 500 had been admitted. From that period to 1706, it is difficult to ascertain the increase. In 1746, there were nearly 500 church members. After that time, no mention is made of admissions till 1753. From that time to the present, an accurate account has been kept. There were admitted and received from other churches, during my predecessor's ministry, more than 400 ; the baptisms during the same period, were over 1000. During my ministry, the admissions have exceeded 500 ; the baptisms have been nearly 1700. The deaths, which were never entered on the church records till since Mr. Hooker's settlement, were from that time till my ordination 442 ; since my residence in this town, they have been 1175. The two sums added are 1617, making an average, during Mr. Hooker's ministry and my own, or a period of 60 years, of 27 deaths a year. By the census taken in 1790, our population was 1628 ; in 1800, more than 2100 ; and in 1810, *two thousand six hundred and thirty-one*.

You can name those, who, in their several professions, and in the various walks of life, have sustained fair and excellent characters, and done worthily in their day. Many can rise up and call them blessed.

We enjoy a pleasant and healthy situation ; we are richly favored with the bounties of providence ; we

and ours experience the unceasing care of Heaven.— During the late contest with a foreign power, no part of the country was less disturbed or threatened. The lines have fallen to us in a desirable place. We enjoy both civil and religious privileges ; bibles, and Sabbaths, and sanctuary seasons: God has a perpetual demand upon us for grateful hearts and obedient lives. What shall we not render to such a munificent benefactor ? All is little enough ; less than God merits ; it is as nothing to his abundant goodness and rich mercy.

The past and long experience, which we and our fathers and elders have had of the kindness and faithfulness of God, should lead us to implore his blessing upon us, and upon our children, and children's children, from generation to generation ; to fear before him, and hope and trust in him through Jesus Christ ; and to leave, in his hands, our personal and family concerns, the interests of the church, of our land, and of mankind. Blessed is that nation, whose God is the Lord, and the people, whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

That, which we have known of the ways and works of God, and which our fathers have told us, let us not hide from our families, showing to them the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works, that he hath done ; that those, who come after us, may not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments and observe all his institutions.

Will the Lord bless us with abundance of peace and grace ; and in God's own time, may we reach that world, where our lives will be perfect, our zeal ardent, our praise unceasing, and our felicity complete and eternal. AMEN.





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